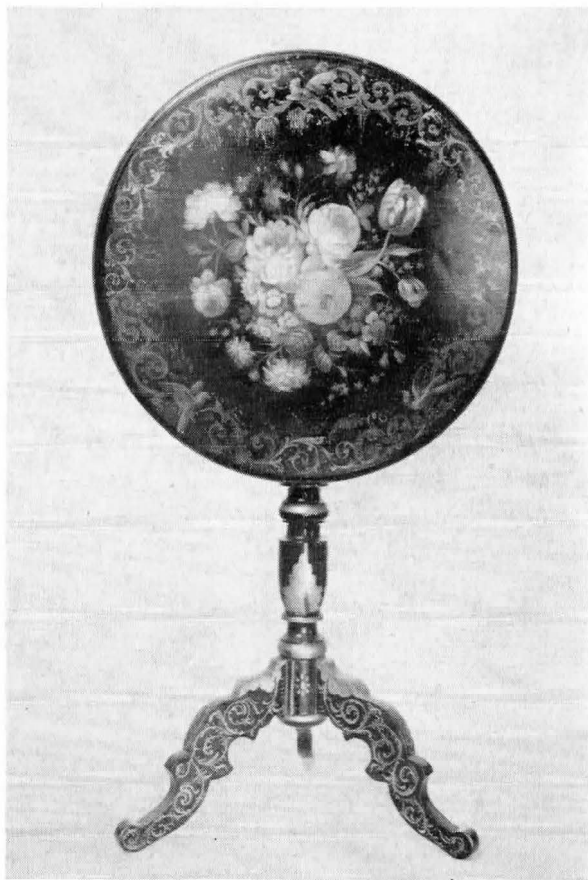


THE DECORATOR

VOLUME V—No. 1

APRIL, 1951



Tip-Top Table
Owned by Evelyn Holmes, Belfast, Maine

Journal of the
Esther Stevens Brazer Guild
of the
Historical Society of Early
American Decoration, Inc.

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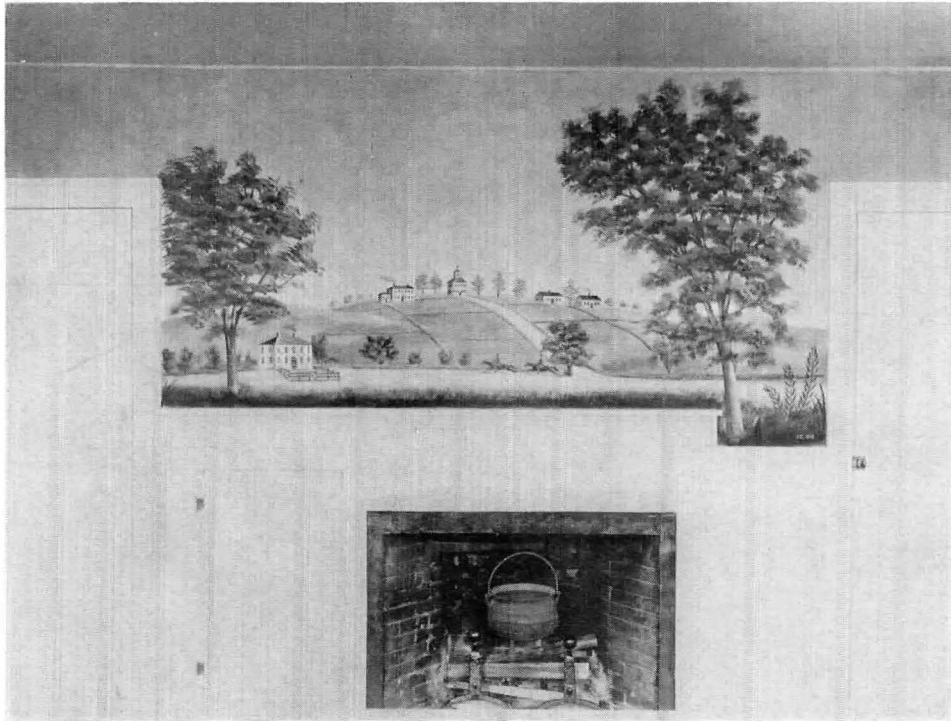
NUMBER 1

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Rufus Porter: Parlor Frescoe, c. 1838
Winn House, Wakefield, Mass.

(Photo—courtesy of Jean Lipman and Art in America)

EDITORIAL

On Thursday, August 28, 1845, there appeared a new magazine in New York, known as the *Scientific American*. Inconspicuously placed within its pages was the following notice:

ART OF PAINTING. Being practically acquainted with every branch of painting, from the plainest house and shipwork, to the finest miniature portraits, we propose to give in a series of numbers, complete instructions in every branch, including mosaic and fresco landscape in oil, transparencies, carriage ornamenting, sign lettering, claro-obscuro, glass staining, perspective, portrait, and miniature, gilding, burnishing, varnishing, etc. We shall be particularly explicit with regard to the preparation of colors, and execution of plain work, that many of those who have had no instruction, may be enabled to accomplish small jobs in this line occasionally, for their own amusement or convenience.

Upon reading this we began to wonder what sort of man was this Rufus Porter who had the audacity to claim expertness in so many and varied fields of art work and decorating. Did he actually have training or experience to back up his extravagant claims?

We asked Mrs. Charles Auer if she would write an article on his accomplishments. Her extensive research and findings seem to indicate that he was fully capable of carrying out any of the advertised branches of painting, and that in addition, he had been a prolific inventor of instruments ranging from a revolving almanac thro labor savings devices, to a revolving rifle which he sold to Col. Samuel Colt.

While Mrs. Auer was working on her article concerning Rufus Porter, which appears in this issue, we learned that Jean Lipman had written and edited a special issue of *Art in America*, October, 1950, devoted to Rufus Porter, Yankee Wall Painter. Besides writing of his life, she presents a detailed description of his known *New England Frescoes*—probably the best and most complete work that has been done on this subject. The story is profusely illustrated and thoroughly documented. We heartily recommend it.

Miss Lipman, and *Art in America*, 11 Andrew St., Springfield 9, Mass., generously loaned us several of the cuts we have used.

"The Book Shelf" a new department, appears for the first time, under the able direction of Jessica Bond.

It is a pleasure to introduce our new Art Editor, Lucille Stuart. She designed the new decorative pieces, and assisted with the preparation of the cornice cuts.

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Our Fifth Anniversary will be given special attention in the next issue of the *Decorator*. In addition to a review of the aims and objectives of the Guild, as well as accomplishments, there will be a compilation of interesting excerpts from letters written by Esther Brazer. Anyone having such letters which might be of interest to Guild members is invited to contact the Editor.



Tip-Top Table
Owned by Evelyn Holmes, Belfast, Maine

"THE PAINTED TILT-TOP TABLES"

EVELYN HOLMES

Any research on these tables seems to have been a minor subject in the story of antiques. As are our trays and boxes, these small tables are an accessory, and yet one of real importance as decoration in our homes and in the social life of women in the past two centuries as well as present day.

We can enjoy a friendly chat while standing holding a tea cup, but how much more enjoyable is that chat if we can be seated by a table—the informality of being seated prolonging that chat into a visit. Many such a scene has taken place around the table you see on the cover of this issue of *The Decorator*; the interest in the type of decoration, the wonder as to who did it, and when, add much to such occasions.

There is no story of any length that can be written about this type of table. This one was purchased by me from a sea captain's home when the estate was being settled. There were not very many articles of furniture in that home that interested me, the early American things having been moved out to make way for the ponderous dark walnut furniture of his retirement days! However, I discovered submerged in a corner, over-shadowed by these dark massive pieces, a bit of gay color. It proved to be this twenty-two inch tilt-top table.

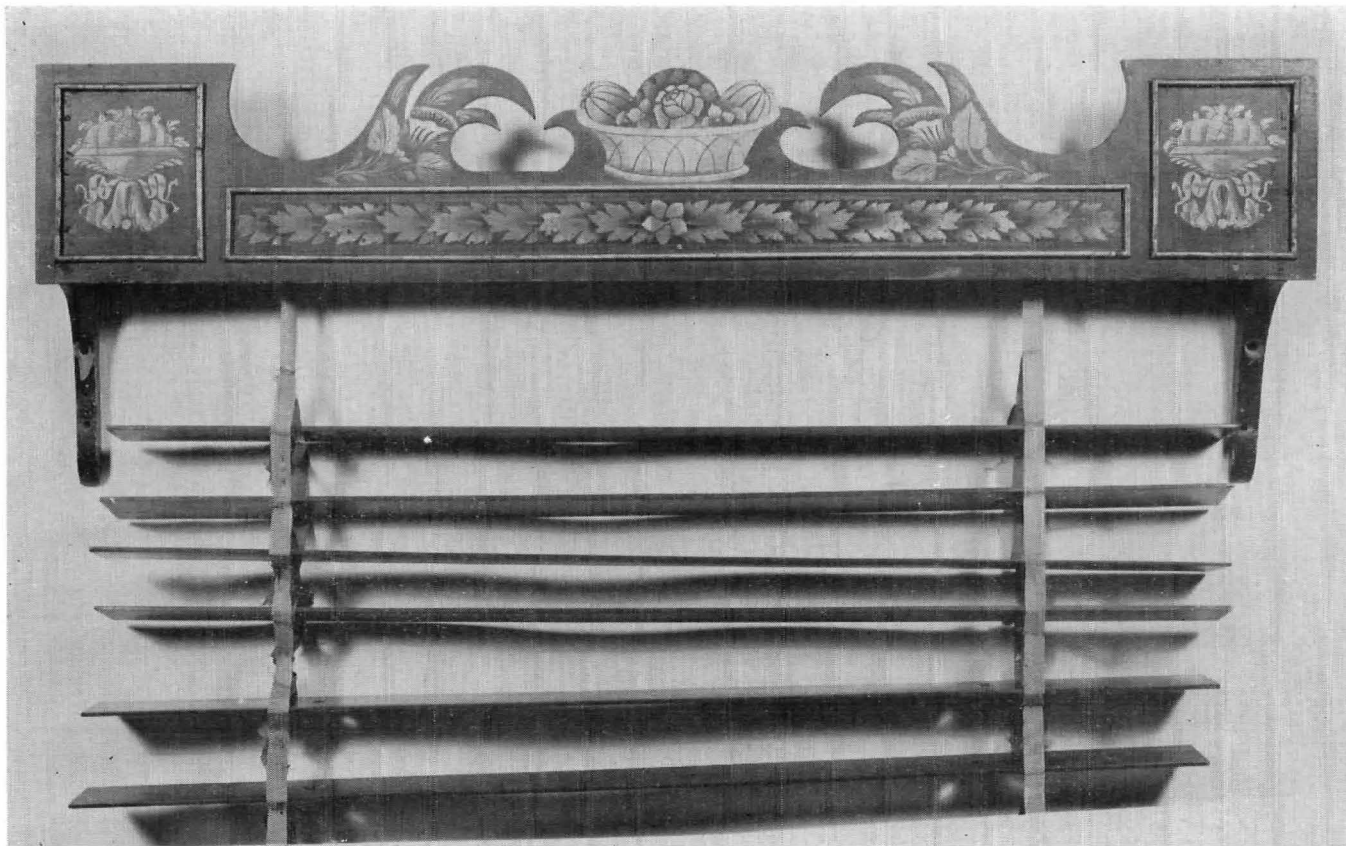
A painting in the center, of roses, carnations, tulips, small fine flowers, was done by an artist. The border is in gold leaf, with three gold leaf birds, over which is transparent color. The border is outlined in gold leaf in three sections. Between these outlines it is filled in with Prussian blue toned with raw umber. The other sections of the border, same design, is solid gold.

There was an English price mark on the back but unfortunately this was rubbed off by a repair man before I ascertained the amount.

Much to my surprise the table exhibited by a friend at Burlington is almost exactly like mine. I knew of her owning the table but had never seen it. A Guild member from Saugerties, New York, writes of one like it in Bronck House, a small museum in that section; another writes of one similar in New Glouster, Maine. I have seen one in a larger size in a home in Cohasset, Massachusetts. All of almost same design. And so the questions come to us, were these tables English or American? When and where were they made? Who were the artists who decorated them?

We know that many of the English cabinet makers who came to this country used the English price marks until they became familiar with our currency! Possibly these men made these tables or they may have been brought to this country from England. The decorating was done by true artists. The paintings similar to the old Flemish flower paintings and to those found on the English Papier-Maché pieces. The English artists who did the decorations on the Papier-Maché are known by name. Perhaps some of them did come to America and travelled through the different sections where cabinet makers were working, and painted these tables. How we wish they had signed their names!

Of these things we cannot be sure. However, there is a great satisfaction in owning such a piece and to know it has been appreciated and cared for through the hundred or hundred and fifty years since its origin.



Cornice With Original Decoration And Attached Venetian Blind As Found Under Eaves of Old House
In Rensselaer, New York

Mrs. J. H. Gordon, 18 Cedar Place, Garden City, L. I.

DECORATED CORNICES

ADELE ELLS

Decorated window and bed cornices dated c 1790-1810 graced some of the fine manor houses of this country from Maine to South Carolina. Robert Adam, Samuel McIntire, Bulfinch, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton are a few of the names we associate with this type of architectural ornament.

Artisans of the period tended to be versatile, "a carpenter and mason," a carpenter and plasterer," "a carpenter and cabinet-maker." Of the cabinet-makers of the time not many are known to us just as cabinet-makers. Some worked from designs and books—others worked without drawings—even in building houses. But as it was usual for the Colonial gentleman of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to understand architecture and hence from, the artisans profited by the general taste of the period.

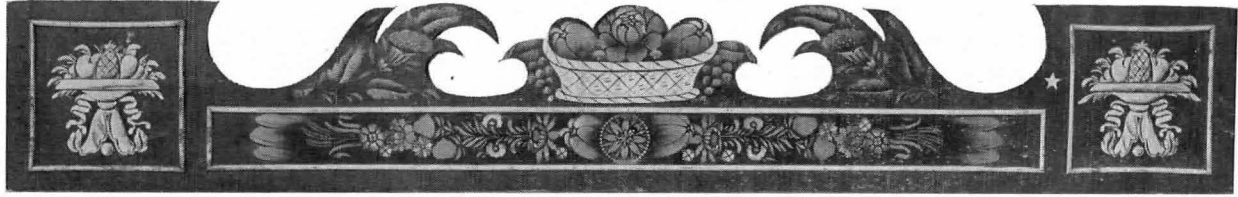
Of painted and decorated window cornices there are many beautiful ones still to be seen in Federal, Early Republic houses or in museums. A distinguished example of a painted bed-cornice is in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum. Painted flowers on a blue background framed by gold-leaf banding marks a handsome cornice on a fine mahogany four-poster. Occasionally the window-cornices matched.

The Early Republic period and the Federal period delighted in these dignified window and bed-frames. The fine fabrics of the period hung gracefully from the gem-like boards. "Toile de Jouy, Lampas, Linen, Brocade" all are listed in inventories of the time and often make the prices of the bed-furnishings seem fantastic.

A toile-de-Jouy designed by Benjamin Franklin to commemorate "The Surrender at Yorktown" shows medallions with the head of Washington, who is bearing a rod on his shoulder, topped by a Liberty Cap. Another fabric of similar type was of red printed linen—the prints being pictures of Washington and Franklin with the Liberty Tree and other American symbols. This particular fabric draped the bed and covered the wing chair in the Haverhill bed-room formerly at the Metropolitan Museum. This linen must have been widely used in the Early Republic for it has often been mentioned and shown in textile exhibitions.

A set of four window cornices with a matching bed cornice for a very fine mahogany four poster is in one of the finest houses in Portsmouth, N. H. The room has great distinction, with very fine furniture. These cornices matched ones which used to be in the Eagle Room, the Haverhill bed-room formerly at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. Mr. Joseph Downs, in answer to a letter says the room has been dismantled and is not likely to be re-assembled.

These cornices had been over-painted with heavy commercial dead-white paint with amateur bronze banding. They needed the original decorations which probably were musical instruments in gold leaf shaded in brown with fine black details. In removing the paint some of the fine gold leaf banding came to light and some vestiges of design in the central raised panels, but not enough to be positive of the original design. Because the cornices were identical in structure with the Haverhill bed-room the owners and I decided that was the design to choose.



8

WINDOW CORNICES

Ends and lower bands defined by narrow moulding

Top: Adele Ells, Dover, N. H., Owner

Lower, Viola Burrows, Noroton, Conn., Owner

I've seen this same design on painted Sheraton chairs from an old house on Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and on a fine mahogany card table which came from Baltimore, Maryland.

The houses of the Early Republic had many such decorated pieces. Of course, they belonged to the wealthy citizens of the time and are still to be found in centers where the wealth of succeeding generations in the trades and commerces did not continue at such a peak.

Many of these pieces with fine gold leaf work and detail were ordered or purchased for special rooms. I am thinking of a set of six Sheraton chairs painted in gold leaf on a vermillion background for the drawing-room of a fine Portsmouth house.

South of New York and Philadelphia in Baltimore and Annapolis, Maryland, some of the finest Sheraton "fancy" furniture was painted. And I believe, although I have not seen them, that there are handsome pieces with decorative glass panels of the type of the cornices at Innerwick.

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Stearns, Martha Genung. Homespun and Blue. Scribners, 1940.

Thorne, Mrs. James Ward. Miniature Rooms. 1941 Art Institute of Chicago.

Note: Plates in Kettel's Early American Rooms, Mrs. Thorne's Miniature Rooms, and Furniture of the Olden Time by Morse, show corniced four-poster beds and corniced windows.



Late Sheraton Style, Mahogany Bed and Stencilled Tester, c. 1800-1810.

Photo From Files Of The Esther Stevens Brazer Collection of Early American Designs.



WINDOW CORNICES

Owned by "Cooper Union Museum," New York City

Top: Straight-edged Type Described As "Hudson River Scene Cornice," scenic design enclosed by broad stripe

Lower: Shaped board with end pieces similar to one shown on page eight

HUDSON RIVER SCENE CORNICES

SHIRLEY DEVOE

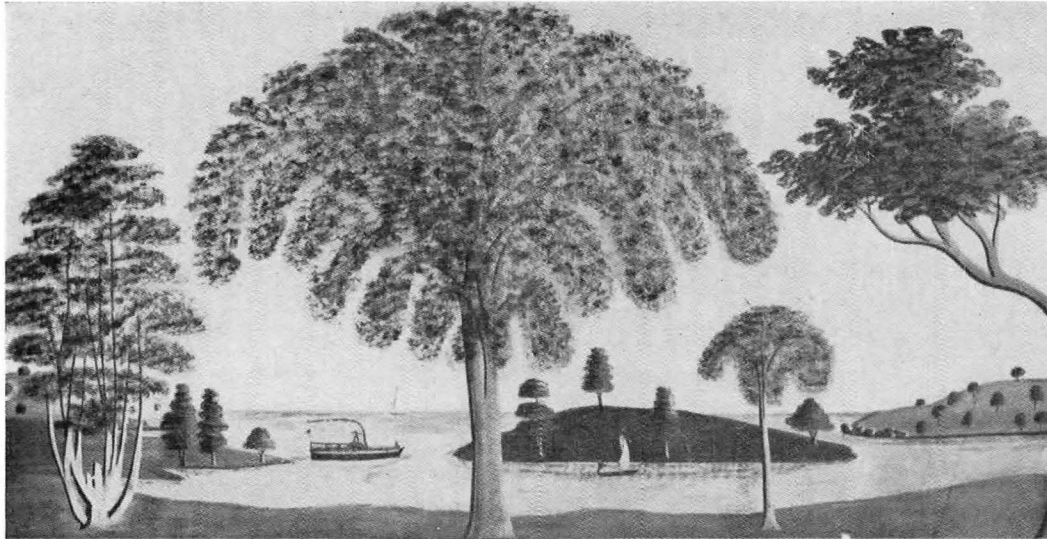
The Hudson River School of Art was enjoying great popularity about the time that decorated chairs and cornices were at the peak of their production. It is not strange then that New York State craftsmen used for their designs the farm and manor life of the Hudson River Valley. These designs were found on Boston Rockers as well as cornices. They show houses placed on an island or river edge with many of the activities of the countryside indicated by fishermen, steamboats, domestic animals and sailing craft. Dark mountains rise in the background and large birds fly in formation among silver bronze clouds. The steamboats resemble the more recent Day Line boats in that they have the familiar side-wheels and walking beam. The names Clermont, Utica and others are found stencilled or painted on the boats.

One pair of cornices I have seen must have been produced as a memorial at the time of Lafayette's death in 1834. These show a simple landscape and off to one side a memorial stone surmounted by an urn, with the customary weeping willow drooping above. On one stone the name Lafayette appears and on the other that of Washington. Similarly on rockers and cornices I have seen a pattern with towered and turreted castles, and knights jousting in the foreground. This type I call the "orange" period for they were stencilled with lots of orange or roman gold bronze in contrast with a medium gold bronze.

The sweeping strokes of rubbed-on bronze for sky, foreground and other flat landscape effects are beautifully executed with very fine powders. (See III.) If you have ever tried to do this you will fully appreciate the results "they" obtained. Trees are formed by use of a stencil for trunks and branches, then the foliage is pounced in very cleverly and effectively.

All the above described cornices are straight-edged with end designs of swans, eagles and other birds enclosed in foliage scrolls or boxed in by stripes. These were put on with metal leaf and framed in a wide gold stripe. The basic color was generally dull olive green but unusual ones have soft yellow ochre or red background color. What fun it would be to see a room with red cornices and the panelling painted to match them. Venetian blinds of the same color were drawn up under the cornices, and if the windows were recessed the panels which lined them were painted to match the cornice color.

A set of Hudson River scene cornices may be seen at the Cooper Union Museum of Arts and Decorations in New York City. If you have access to Janet Waring's book "Early American Stencils" you will find on pages 127 and 128, good examples of the stencils and the cornices I have described. The cornice at the bottom of page 128 evidently has a pale yellow base which gives the scenic design on black, a dramatic quality. I cannot help emphasizing the quality of the bronze work especially the foliage, smoke and water effects. Black free-hand brushwork used for grasses and small outlines add form and interest.



Jonathan D. Poor: Harbor Scene Fresco, c. 1835
Priest House, Groton, Mass.

Jonathan D. Poor was the son of Rufus' Porter's sister Ruth. He may have been the lad "Joe" who travelled with Rufus as a portrait painting assistant, and evidently spent ten years (1830-1840) as an active member of the Porter landscape school. He was the most prolific of Porter's wall painting pupils, and stuck very exactly to Porter's designs and coloring. From *Art in America*, 1950.

(Photo—courtesy of Jean Lipman and Art in America)

RUFUS PORTER

MAY HALE AUER

PAINTER — AUTHOR — PUBLISHER — INVENTOR

1792-1884

Rufus Porter was a quaint and versatile character, a true Yankee—a wanderer and a genius.

He was born May 1, 1792 at West Boxford, Massachusetts, a descendant of John Porter who emigrated from England to this country and settled in Hingham, Massachusetts in 1635. Most of his early life was spent in and around Portland Maine; he had very little "schooling" though at the age of four he was learning Noah Webster's *Spelling Book* and when twelve he spent six months at Freyeburg Academy, Freyeburg, Maine; by this time he was adept in inventing such mechanisms as water wheels, wind mills, lathes etc. He also played the fife and violin, and wrote poetry.

In 1807 he walked 106 miles from Portland to West Boxford to be apprenticed to a cobbler as his family wanted him to "settle down." But he was not happy and returned to Portland where he was a fifer for military companies, played the violin for dances and worked on inventions.

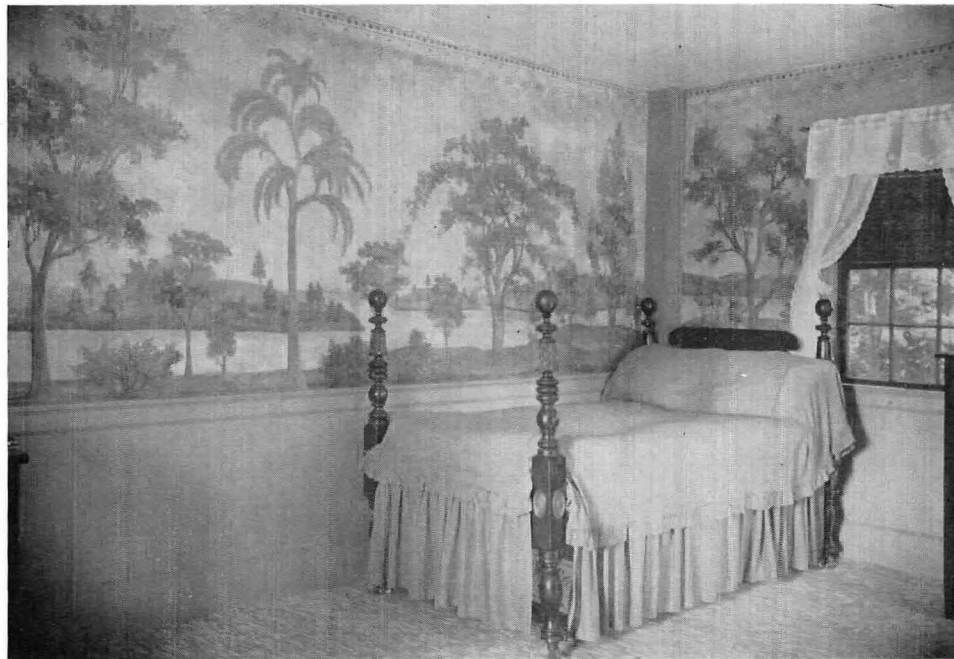
In 1810 at the age of 18, he was apprenticed to a house and signpainter and soon became very proficient.

At the outbreak of the War in 1812, he painted gunboats and was fifer for the Portland Light Infantry. In 1813 at Denmark, Maine he painted sleighs, taught drumming and wrote his first book "The Martial Musicians Companion—containing instructions for the drum and fife, together with an elegant collection of beats, airs, marches, etc." He enrolled in the Militia in 1814 and saw several months of actual service; then taught school in Baldwin and Waterford, Maine; later he made grist mills at Portland and was married there in 1815.

About this time he began his wanderings as an itinerant portrait painter and he painted his way to Boston, to New York, to New Jersey, to Baltimore, and in 1820 he appears in Alexandria, Virginia. There he invented the "Camera Obscura," a dark box fitted with a lens and mirror; with this he could rapidly sketch the outlines of his subject on a piece of paper and produce a satisfactory portrait in fifteen minutes which he sold for one dollar. This was one of his most profitable ventures, so he decorated his Camera Obscura box and a hand cart, placed a flag upon it and "wended his way northward from village to village painting portraits and at odd hours making inventions."

During the years from 1820 to 1840 his inventions were numerous; many were labor saving devices—corn sheller, churn, washing machine, also a "wonderful" clock, steam carriage, signal telegraph and alarm. Also recorded are a revolving almanac; a twin boat propelled by horsepower to run on the Connecticut River, and a successful cord making machine. Many inventions he sold outright, or sold shares for very small sums.

However his inability to stay at any occupation very long caused the loss of these enterprises, and possibly to recoup he frequently returned to his artistic



Rufus Porter, Frescoe in Kate Douglas Wiggin's Old Home, c. 1830
Quillcote, Hollis Center, Maine

(Photo—courtesy of Jean Lipman and Art in America)

endeavors. In 1824 he started his "Landscape Painting on Walls," and finding it greatly admired, he travelled from place to place with his apparatus on a hand cart. Unfortunately we have no exact official records of these as we have of his inventions and books, although many of his walls have been identified, and are still to be seen in their original state.

His book *Curious Arts*, first written in Billerica, Massachusetts, in 1825, found a good sale, and was followed by five more editions printed in Concord, N. H. in 1825-26.

In 1840 he was offered an interest in a newspaper and decided to become an editor. He made it a scientific newspaper, titled it *The New York Mechanic*. It thrived until the following year when he moved the office to Boston, changed the title to *American Mechanic*. Once again his attention was diverted and publication stopped.

His next venture was electroplating, and he invented a revolving rifle which he sold to Col. Samuel Colt for \$100. (The now famous Colt revolver.) "In 1844 the religious mania of the Millerites struck him and he was one of the most ardent believers, who hourly expected the second advent of the Messiah."

Back to New York while working at electroplating he wrote a prospectus for an eight page weekly newspaper. He named it *The Scientific American* and began its first issue August 28, 1845 with a cash capital of \$100 and a contemplated indebtedness for a few hundreds more—after running it for six months he sold it to Munn and Company, though his name appeared as Editor until May 29th, 1847, and in Volumes I and II there was a column by him—"Curious Arts."

Evidently inspired by the California Gold Rush in 1849, he wrote another book *Aerial Navigation or New York to California in three days . . . Fully demonstrated with a full description of a Perfect Aerial Locomotive, with estimates of capacity, speed and cost of construction*. The book aroused amusement, and three color lithographs, issued as burlesques in 1849 by N. Currier and A. Donnelly, were used in a reprint of this book in 1935, with an introduction by Lt. Commander H. V. Wiley (L. R. Kennedy, San Francisco, printer). There is a Currier and Ives print "The Way We Go To California" in the State Street Trust Company's Collection, Boston.

Most of his later life was spent on his inventions and writing patent specifications for inventors, and he did not often return to his paintings, though he continued his nomadic habits. He finally settled in Bristol, Connecticut. "Hale and hearty" up to the last three days of his life, he died at the age of 93, while visiting his son in New Haven, August 13, 1884.

Two quotes from obituaries said of him: *He possessed a high degree of contentment . . . Few men have lived as long . . . fewer still have studied out and produced so vast a variety of useful inventions. The most celebrated of his works is the Scientific American . . . So long as it endures the memory of Rufus Porter will be held in grateful remembrance. And . . . Although he has not in any sense attained the fame and eminence of Morse, a Howe or Edison, Rufus Porter will live as one of the best and brightest examples of the versatility of American Invention.*

The Book, CURIOS ARTS

The first edition, 48 pages with 64 receipts, undated, but known to have been written in 1825 at Billerica, Massachusetts, was printed by J. T. Peters, Concord, Massachusetts. The title page reads *A Select Collection of Approved, Genuine, Secret and Modern Receipts for the Preparation and Execution of Various Valuable and Curious Arts as Practiced by the Best Artists of the Present Age.*

Having been privileged to see nine of these books, we have come to the conclusion that there were at least five more printings of this book in Concord, New Hampshire: one in 1825; one in 1826 (92 pages, 110 receipts); and one marked 2nd edition in 1826 has 121 pages, 116 receipts. This was printed by J. B. Moore; there are 4th and 5th editions, so marked, printed by Wm. Brown in 1826, with 160 pages and 117 receipts.

In later editions he added receipts, deleted or changed some; added a ten page appendix, and changed the title page to *A Select Collection of Valuable and Curious Arts, and Interesting Experiments which are well explained and warranted genuine, and may be performed easily, safely and at little expense."*

The 4th and 5th editions, printed in 1826, present in the appendix *A Catalogue of the various articles mentioned in the preceding pages with prices as follows:*

Gold leaf, 45 cents a book

Gold bronze, 75 cents a pennyweight (1/20 oz.)

Silver leaf, 30 cents a book

Silver bronze, 50 cents a pennyweight

Lake (drop lake), a rose coloured pigment, two dollars an ounce

In her book *Early American Decoration*, Esther Brazer quoted ten receipts from the 5th edition. Others of interest are receipts for making Shellac Varnish for Japanning, Copal, Mastic and Spirit Varnishes; cheap imitations of gold and silver bronze, waterproof gilding and silvering on signs, etc. . . . cheap methods of painting walls (using a glue base), method of tracing using plumbago (black lead) or red ochre.

There are many unusual receipts which cover nearly everything . . . The Art of Moulding Figures in Relief; chemical experiments: to make inks, glues, cements, polishes, essences, colored crayons, sealing wax, dyes, skyrocketers, detonating balloons; to restore old writing, instructions on engraving, etching, printing, illustration on calico printing, the construction of a galvanic pile or battery, and the Art of Manufacturing Paper Hangings.

Three receipts are amusing: "To prepare eggs so as to cause the fowls which may be of them to be white feathered;" "To change the colour of a horse from white to black;" and of Exhilarating Gas he says *the effects are in generally highly pleasurable and resemble those attendant on the agreeable period of intoxication . . . without the debility produced by ardent spirits.*

Twenty years later in the *Scientific American*, he edited the column *Curious Arts* which ran through the first two volumes. It is interesting to note how many types of Painting he has added to his repertoire, and the changes in paints and methods.

These instructions were so popular that in Vol. II he started a series called the *Art of Painting* with this explanatory note: *Since the early numbers of this paper have been out of print there has been a constant demand for them on account of certain instructions on the Art of Painting and various other arts . . . arrangements have been made to republish in this volume some of the articles so much called for, with such revisions and improvements as may appear expedient.*

This comprehensive series ran through 19 issues, covering the subjects of grinding paints, painting woodwork, sign painting, ornamental gilding and bronzing, painting on glass, transparent painting on cambric, landscape painting in oils, ornamental painting on signs, carriages and banners; graining woodwork, portrait painting, and miniature painting.

Of Landscape Painting on Walls he ventured: *This kind of painting having been thoroughly proved to be cheaper and more durable, as well as more elegant, than paper hangings, there appears to be no other good reason than the want of competent artists to execute such work, to prevent its coming into general use in preference.* Eight issues were then devoted to detailed instructions, including the use and preparation of brushes, making transfer paper, and preparation of designs.

He summarizes his theory of design with these words: *In finishing up landscape scenery, it is neither necessary or expedient in all cases to imitate nature. There are a great variety of beautiful designs, which are easily and quickly produced with the brush, and which excel nature itself in picturesque brilliancy, and richly embellish the work, though not in perfect imitation of anything.*

And thus we have Rufus Porter, inventive genius and modern artist in the nineteenth century, whose life's story is *one of the best and brightest examples of the versatility of American Invention.*

We are indebted to the following for their cooperation and kindness in making material available for this study: New Hampshire Historical Society; New Hampshire State Library; Concord, N. H. Public Library; Maine State Library; Portland Public Library; Library of Congress; Nina Fletcher Little.

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A STENCILLED ROOM ATTRIBUTED TO MOSES EATON
In house owned by William Taylor Morson, Bradford, N. H.

A STENCILLED ROOM ATTRIBUTED TO MOSES EATON

WILLIAM TAYLOR MORSON

Back in 1941 we decided to buy a summer place in New England. We wanted an unusual place, something colonial if possible. Then followed weeks of exploration and disappointment. Finally, when our patience was about exhausted we stumbled upon a place in the hills back of the village of Bradford, N. H. The house had been "modernized" and as we approached there was nothing to suggest what we were to discover inside—two frescoed rooms and one stencilled room, all in excellent state of preservation. The back of the house was a shambles, the chimneys would have to be rebuilt and the outside restored to its original condition as nearly as possible. If you find one stencilled room or one frescoed room in a house you are in luck, but here was a find—a house with three show rooms! The place was beautifully located too, though a bit more isolated than we would have preferred.

We bought the place and set about to give the "three rooms" a proper setting. The saga is told in detail in an article which appeared in the July, 1948, issue of "The Magazine Antiques" where there are pictures of the place as it was originally, as it was when we purchased it, and as it now stands. There are also pictures of the frescoed rooms and of the stencilled room, all of which are in their original state, never even having been touched up.

While restoring the place we set out to discover something about its history. We found that the house had been built by a Joshua Eaton in the early eighteen hundreds. Joshua was quite a leader in the neighborhood. He organized the first masonic society in the locality which met regularly in the main parlor of his home where the masonic rule and compass was painted on the wall over the mantelpiece and still remains there. He was also a major in the State Militia. His son, John Hill Eaton, was a member of the state legislature for many years and his portrait, painted by his daughter, hangs in the rear corridor in the Capital Building in Concord.

All this we learned from a local farmer whose father had married one of John Hill Eaton's daughters and who himself had been born in the house. He told us that the walls on either side of the staircase had been decorated with fresco paintings, showing the rising sun on one side and the setting sun on the other. He remembered the paintings as a boy, he said, but the children had rubbed them so with their dirty hands while going up and down the stairs that his father had painted them over. We also learned a good deal more about the Eaton family from a granddaughter of John Hill Eaton who came to visit us one summer and was delighted to find that the old homestead had been restored.

Unfortunately neither of these Eaton descendants could give us any information about who had done the painting and stencilling. However it was a tradition in the family that the work had been done by two young men who travelled about on horseback. This was all they knew.

Up to this time we thought we had discovered a "gem" of which the rest of the world was unaware. It was quite a thrill to learn one day, while talking to the caretaker of the President Franklin Pierce House in Hillsboro, N. H., that

the house had been "written up" by Janet Waring in her "Early American Stencils" (See 65 et. seq. and photographs there referred to). Miss Waring, however, had had no more success than we had had in discovering the names of the artisans who had done the work; so when the article for "Antiques" was written they were referred to as "anonymous." With this, Jean Lipman, author of "American Primitive Painting" and other books and articles on kindred subjects, took exception and in a letter to "Antiques" part of which is published in the October 1948 issue at page 275, she has this to say:

"The frescoes in the old Joshua Eaton house, now Mr. Morson's, I believe were executed by Rufus Porter and the stencil painter, Moses Eaton Jr., about 1825. I have identified Porter frescoes in close to a hundred New England houses and these frescoes are entirely typical of his early work; while the stencils are almost identical with some executed by Moses Eaton who was undoubtedly related to the Eatons who owned the house."

"Rufus Porter and Moses Eaton Jr., worked as decorators in a number of the same towns, at just the same time, and it seems very possible that they collaborated not only in the Eaton house but in a number of others."

I bow to Miss Lipman's superior knowledge on these subjects. Furthermore, I now have some additional information which tends to confirm Miss Lipman's opinion as to the author of the stencilling.

Several summers ago a lady who had read my article in "Antiques" came to visit us in New Hampshire and took a tracing of the stencils. This tracing she later compared with the original Moses Eaton Stencils now in the possession of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and wrote to me as follows:

" . . . the border fitted *exactly* on my tracing. Not only that but the color of the pigment was the same—still left on the stencils."

I might add that Miss Lipman includes a photograph of one of the frescoed walls in her book "American Primitive Painting" Plate 94.

The relation between Moses Eaton and Joshua Eaton, if any, still remains to be determined.

For those who do not have ready access to Miss Waring's book or to the back number of "Antiques," a photograph of the stencilled room is printed with the kind consent of "Antiques" where it originally appeared. The walls are of a canary yellow now somewhat faded by time. The leaves are green, the hearts are red and the remaining designs are combinations of green and red. The room was originally decorated for use as a bridal chamber, which no doubt accounts for the hearts and wedding bells. Note how the frieze terminates above the closet door and a totally different design is substituted. This is entirely original.

It has been a very exciting and satisfying experience to own and restore one of the few homes of the early nineteenth century which retain, well preserved, the original wall decorations in *three rooms*.

EARLY WALLPAPERS AND THEIR REPRODUCTIONS

WILLIAM J. GALLIGAN

Much as some persons would like to claim otherwise, there is little evidence that most examples of early wallpaper discovered in this country are truly of American origin, but rather either English or French. We are consoled, however, in that some of the simple and unassuming specimens dating from 1770 to 1820 may be rightfully and proudly claimed as "American." These examples were inspired by the utter simplicity of the period in which they were made, and by that innate sense of correct line and proportion which is reflected in all the arts and crafts of America during those years.

American wall papers of the middle eighteenth century fall generally into the category of "stencils." The design was usually done in one color, often by some local artist, and printed locally by an individual rather than by some established manufactory. Many of these early papers were stencilled by the local trunk and harness maker. He sold these papers both as wallpaper and also for decoration in his substantial travelling, household, and doll trunks, which were usually covered with deer or cowhide, and studded generously with brass tacks. In the same fashion, the local makers of bonnet and hat boxes embellished their wares for M'lady by covering these items with various examples of both domestic and imported wallpaper.

Fine old specimens of these early wallpapers have fortunately come down to us, well preserved on that substantial rag paper stock which the ravages of the years have not disintegrated in the least. Their designs are still brightly colored with the material used at the time; red ochre, indigo, yellow-berry wash, red lead, logwood wash, lamp black, and white lead.

This early period was wholly lacking in general refinement, yet well blessed in simple and direct artistic expression. Papers of this period abound in good examples of geometric and stylized floral form. This form is so simple as to be primitive, yet at the same time quite "modern" and contemporary. It is filled with illusion rather than detail, gaining an effect from simple, rather than complex pattern and coloration.

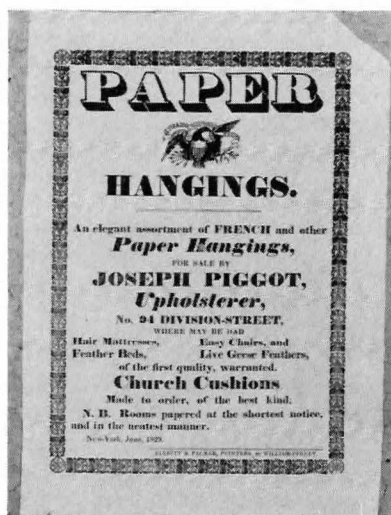
Opposed to this essentially good but imperfect attempt at making wallpaper in America was a contemporary period in England and France, so refined that it might well be called the "golden period" of wallpaper manufacture. Beginning with a shrewd attempt to reproduce cheaply on paper the patterns of the rich tapestries and other fabrics formerly used as wall coverings, the early English and French makers simply converted these patterns onto paper. Available to the market came a wide variety of patterns in wallpaper, inspired chiefly by the then current vogue of Chinese and Middle Eastern art in Europe. Native European influence in wallpaper design was of secondary importance during this middle eighteenth century period.

By 1750, England far surpassed France in the quality and quantity of wallpaper manufactured. This superiority, however, quickly shifted to France, when the English government, quite pennywise but pound foolish, placed prohibitive

taxation on wallpaper made in rolls rather than the earlier sheet form. The French makers quickly took advantage of this situation, and immediately developed a tremendous domestic market for their product, and established a thriving export trade with the American colonies.

At the same time, enterprising American makers realized that a good market for wallpaper in the colonies warranted their copying the French and English imports. The emphasis seems to have concentrated on copying particularly the French papers, which now far surpassed the English in excellence of both printing and designing.

You will note from the accompanying advertisement, dated New York, June, 1829, that the merchant, Joseph Piggot, emphasizes French "paper hangings," as wallpaper was called during that period. "Other paper hangings" assuredly refers to American, rather than English examples.



In a former paragraph it was stated that in the 18th century, many examples of European wallpapers have erroneously been credited to American makers. During the early 19th century period, however, the reverse is quite true. Many examples of these years, 1800-1830, which have been for years regarded as French or English imports have more recently been correctly classified as the product of some worthy Philadelphia, Hartford or Boston maker. True it is that some of these examples, on close inspection, are somewhat lacking in the excellence of printing technique, and the superb artistic rendering of their French or English originals, but they obviously were sufficiently excellent to gain prominence in a competitive market to a highly conscious and discriminating public. I say "highly conscious, public," for it appears to be the sad truth that wallpaper in the 18th and early 19th century was much more highly appreciated by the general public for its artistic merit and decorative value than it was for about 75 years, until the very recent renaissance of the last twenty years. We

can look backward shamefacedly with everything but pride at the atrocious examples of wallpaper, particularly American, which flooded the market from 1850 to 1925. I believe the most pathetic example I have ever acquired is one of about 1860. This specimen blithely runs the entire gamut of artistic attempt. It includes such wide dissociated motifs as the Sphinx and its accompanying scenes of the Nile, a classic Greek temple with dancing girl, and a view of Niagara Falls. All these are interspersed with the most pathetically inadequate geometric and floral frames.

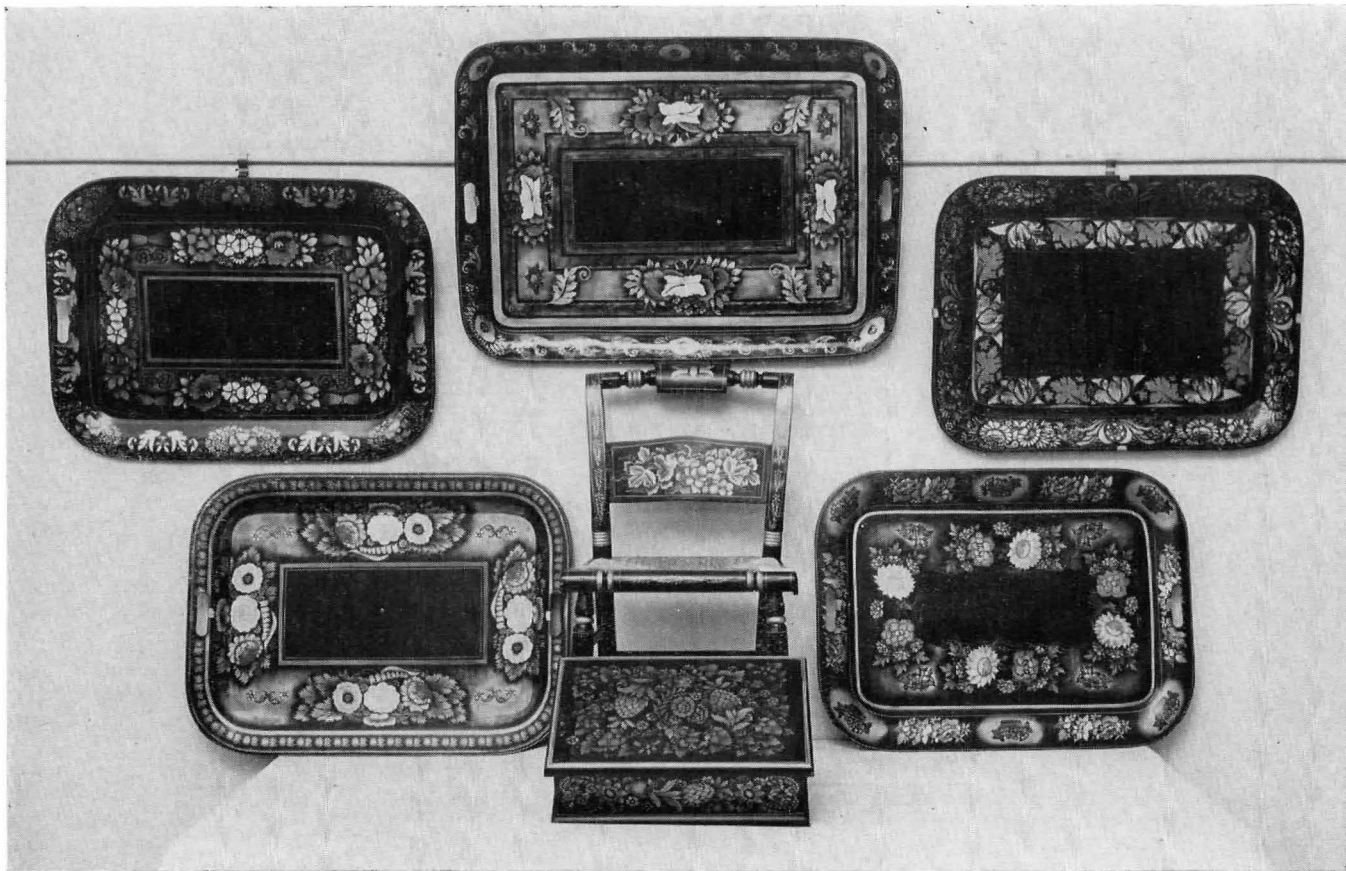
The earliest wallpapers were appropriately called by the French "papiers peints" and were entirely hand painted, or had an outline pattern printed and then filled in by hand. Stencilling of patterns immediately followed, and somewhat accelerated the older hand painted process, in order to keep up with the increased demand for the product. The newer stencil technique was fairly slow, however, and resulted in much spoilage of paper through imperfect printing. Hand blocking evolved, employing the same method as had been used previously for printing fabric for many hundreds of years, both in the Far East and in Europe. During the late 18th century the art of hand blocking wallpaper became so highly developed in France that one maker skillfully combined over two thousand separate wood blocks to obtain the effect of an intricate and detailed scenic wallpaper panel.

Hand blocking remained the most popular and practical method of making wallpaper both in Europe and America until about 1850, when maching "roller" printing was developed and widely used for mass production. This method still remains in use for making commercial wallpapers. Like every mechanical process, it has the usual advantages of quantity production, but artistic limitations. The craftsmanship of any manual process results in a combined effect of pleasing design and color which can never be duplicated mechanically.

To accurately reproduce, therefore, the fine old wallpapers of yesteryears, we must revert to a hand process, if we are to approximate the effects of the fine craftsmen and artists of the past. Fortunately the silk screen process of reproduction has been developed to a high degree, which permits authentic reproduction of both pattern and color, of the old wallpaper specimens. This process also combines an efficiency of method which makes the reproduction fairly nominal in cost to the purchaser.

Many fine examples of the early wallpapers are still waiting to be discovered. Many are hidden snugly away under countless layers of other papers on the walls of old houses. Others are still decorating the insides of the old leather trunks which grace the haylofts of old barns, and which often turn up at country auctions. Other specimens wait patiently on old hatboxes. Still others are curled up in old rolls in attic corners, praying earnestly that they won't be thrown out, or burned up as just "old wallpaper."

Hopefully there will be more and more persons interested enough to ferret out these old examples of wallpaper, and see that they ultimately reach a place which will assure their preservation as historical specimens. They will also be used as sources of fine reproductions of wallpaper which may be enjoyed by the countless persons who appreciate the great artistry and craftsmanship of days gone by.



"A" AWARDS IN STENCILLING AT BURLINGTON, VERMONT:

Elizabeth Balsbough, Helen Caswell, Mrs. Charles Coffin, Zilla Lea, Margaret Watts

FALL MEETING OF THE ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER GUILD

Burlington, Vermont, October 13, 1950

The regular Fall meeting of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild was held in the Fleming Museum of the University of Vermont, on October 13th at 10 A.M., Mrs. Max Muller presiding. She extended a cordial welcome to the members and reminded them that this was the fifth Fall meeting, others having been held in Wellesley, Mass., 1946; Hanover, N. H. 1947; Poland Springs, Maine, 1948; Kingston, Mass., 1949.

Mrs. Muller announced that the Board of Directors had reluctantly accepted the resignation of Mrs. Arthur Chivers as president of the Guild, which had been tendered in August. She complimented Mrs. Chivers on her admirable work and splendid record as president, and then called on Mrs. John McAuliffe, Guild Social Chairman, to present a gift to Mrs. Chivers from the Board of Directors. In her presentation, Mrs. McAuliffe said that Helen Chivers would long be remembered as a capable executive and organizer, as well as for her graciousness and sincerity in handling matters pertaining to the Guild. Mrs. Chivers thanked all members for their cooperation, and said that only doctor's orders had necessitated her resignation.

Mr. Walter Wright, general chairman of the Burlington meeting, extended a warm welcome to members and expressed the hope that the meeting would be enjoyed by all. He announced that a dinner would be served at the Hotel Vermont that evening, followed by a talk by Mr. Graeme, Vermont State teacher training expert.

Mrs. Oliver Eastman made an announcement that members were invited to visit the Shelburne Museum, in the village of Shelburne. She told of the very extensive collection of dolls to be seen there, as well as other Early Americana, collected by Mrs. J. Watson Webb of New York City and Shelburne. The Museum is under the direction of Mr. Lewis Wiggins, formerly owner of the Wiggins Tavern in Northampton, Mass.

Mrs. Vinton Ziegler, program chairman, introduced Mr. William J. Galligan of New York City, who gave an interesting and entertaining talk on Wallpapers. He began with the wall decorations of the caveman and traced the historical development of papers to the present day. His talk was particularly interesting because of the many examples of paper which he showed, both old and new, as well as good and bad.

Mrs. Herbert Coggins announced that the auction would be held at 2 P.M., and the meeting adjourned for lunch.

Reported by LOUISE MCAULIFFE
Secretary, Pro-tem

BUSINESS MEETING OF THE ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER GUILD

Burlington, Vermont, October 14, 1950

The business meeting of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild was held in the Fleming Museum at the University of Vermont on October 14, 1950, at 10 A.M. with Martha Muller, president pro-tem, presiding.

Mrs. John McAuliffe, in the absence of the secretary, Mrs. Henry Hughes, read the minutes of the Spring Meeting at Sturbridge, Mass., and of the Directors' meetings on the 12th and 13th of October, 1950.

She also read the treasurer's report sent in by Mrs. Charles Safford. From May 1st, 1950, to October 1, the total credits were \$3,114.33; disbursements, \$1,032.97; balance \$2,081.36.

Committee reports were then called for. Mrs. Elizabeth Gordon reported a total of 528 members; 158 charter members; 349 regular members; 2 honorary and 19 associate members. There were 74 apprentice applicants, 94 applicants effective in July, 1950, making a total of 697 members and applicants.

Mrs. S. Burton Heath, publications chairman, introduced Miss Jean Wylie, Guild business manager, saying she thought all Guild members should be made aware of how much Miss Wylie is doing for the Guild.

Mrs. Gordon Scott read a long report, including recommendations from the Judging and Standards committee that the use of black and white tracings should be discouraged as unsatisfactory and undesirable. Mrs. Scott then introduced various applicants who were present.

Mrs. Carroll Drury, exhibitions chairman, welcomed members to Vermont, reminding them it is her home state. She told of an exhibit of the Pine Tree Chapter at Lincolnville, Maine, and one planned at the Suffolk County Museum, Stony Brook, Long Island. She reminded members that Guild sponsored exhibits, carried out by Chapters, should first be cleared by the Exhibition Chairman of the Guild.

Mrs. Vinton Ziegler, program chairman, explained that the tour of exhibits had been planned for this time in place of the demonstrations, and asked for suggestions for coming meetings.

In the absence of Mrs. Mark Weiss, nominating chairman, Mrs. Muller read the following names of those Directors whose terms expire in 1951:

Mrs. Arthur Chivers, New Hampshire
Mrs. Gordon Scott, Massachusetts
Mrs. Sherwood Martin, Connecticut
Mr. Walter Wright, Vermont

She asked that suggestions for directors be sent to Mrs. Weiss, 11 Randolph Place, Ridgewood, N. J.

Mrs. Muller introduced Mrs. James Gambee, newly appointed publicity chairman, who suggested that members send to her the names of their local papers that might be interested in reports of Guild activities.

Mrs. Andrew Underhill, meeting places chairman, reported the difficulty and expense of having another Guild meeting in New York City, and that difficulty had also been met in procuring overnight accommodations on Long Island. Patchogue might be considered for the spring meeting, otherwise, Princeton, N. J. and Stamford, Conn. had been suggested.

Mrs. Herbert Coggins reported the following receipts for the Museum committee:

Long Island Chapter sale.....	\$127.00
Photographs donated by Mrs. Cyde Holmes at Sturbridge	45.00
Sale of patterns, donated by Mrs. Charles Auer.....	50.00
Sale of Albums, Fairchester Chapter.....	20.00
Personal contributions,	
Mrs. Hessler Gates.....	5.00
Mrs. John McAuliffe.....	15.00
Auction at Burlington.....	236.10

Mrs. Muller then asked new members whose work had just been accepted by the Board of Judges to stand, and they were deservedly applauded.

She reported the results of the mail vote on the raising of Guild dues, as follows:

- 96 votes were cast against raising dues from \$3 to \$5.
- 63 votes were cast to raise the dues.
- 2 returns to go with the majority.

Mrs. Muller explained that the total of 161 votes returned was a very small response from about 600 voting members, and said that the Directors would be obliged to go over the matter again and find other ways of raising funds. She read some of the comments and suggestions from both those who voted for and against the proposition.

Mrs. Edith Hall, registration chairman of the Burlington meeting, reported the following attendance:

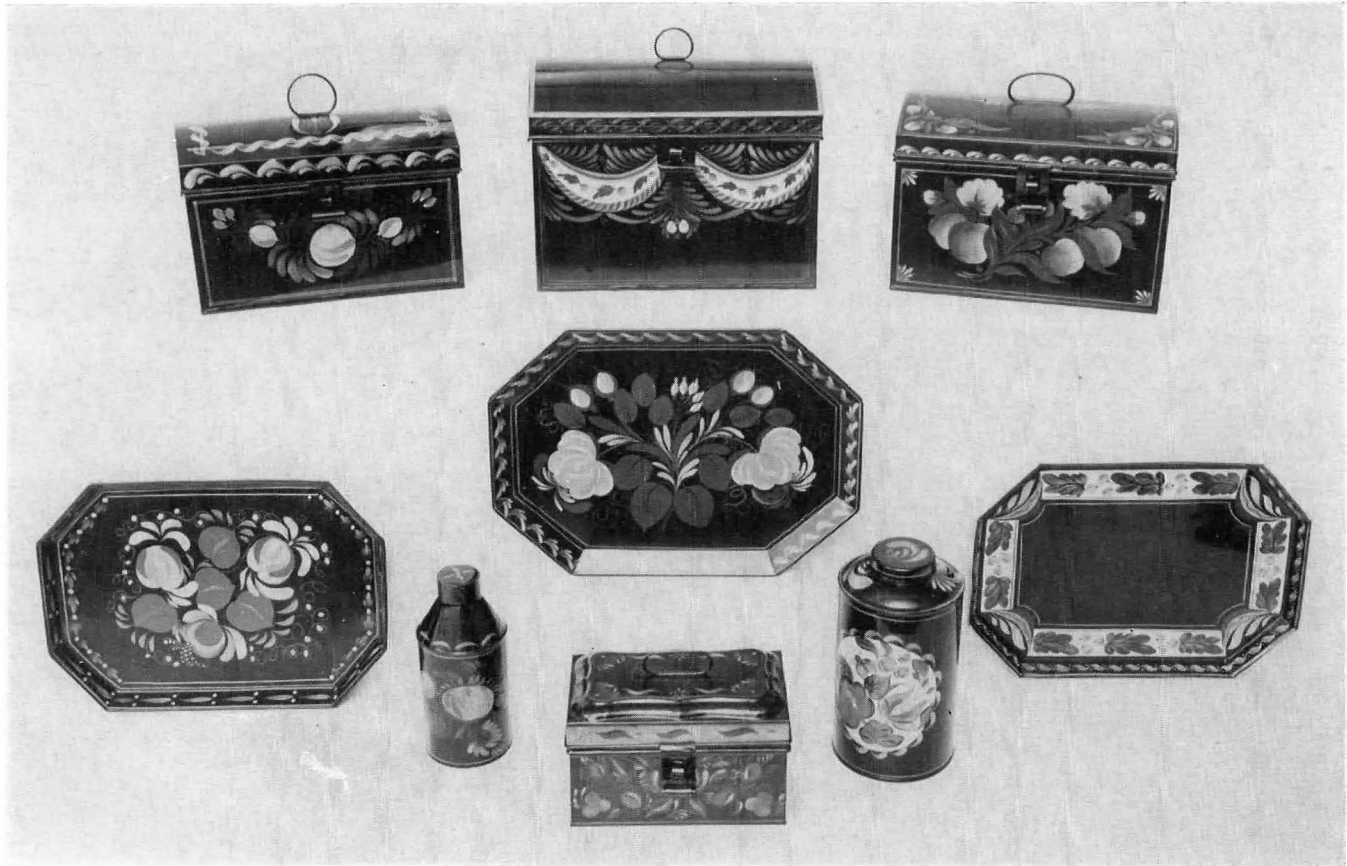
23 registered guests
112 members

Mrs. Hall said that many more persons had attended the exhibit in Fleming Museum.

Mrs. Muller then thanked Mrs. Hall for her efforts and efficiency in handling the registration. She proffered thanks on behalf of the Guild to Mr. Wright, overall chairman for the Burlington meeting; to Mr. Herbert Coggins and Mr. Carl Kidner for having been such entertaining auctioneers, and to all who contributed to having made the meeting such a decided success.

The meeting was adjourned at 11 A.M.

Reported by LOUISE MCAULIFFE
Secretary Pro-tem



"A" AWARDS IN COUNTRY TIN AT BURLINGTON, VERMONT:
Elizabeth Angier, Elizabeth Balsbough, Dorothy Fredy, Sara Fuller,
Louise Hardie, Muriel Link, Helen McCarthy, Margaret Watts.

EXHIBITION AT BURLINGTON, VERMONT

The University of Vermont generously offered their Art Gallery in the Fleming Museum for the Fall Exhibition. The Guild was most fortunate in having this gallery and members responded generously to the appeal to make this Exhibition of Museum quality.

Members seemed to enjoy and find it helpful to have all articles arranged in classes as they are judged, namely:

Stencilling
Country Painting
Gold Leaf
Lace Edge
Free-hand Bronze
Glass Panels

About 125 fine originals were carefully scrutinized. Those which covered all points required for judging were marked with a silver star and later called to the attention of members during the guided tours. Favorable comments seem to make this feature worthy of repetition.

The collection of Lace Edge trays was quite outstanding. It included more of the early period showing the fine detail and precision in painting of the Master Craftsman.

People were much interested in the large collection of original miniatures that included practically all types of Early American Decoration, from stencilling to fine gold-leaf work. They also enjoyed the portfolio of photographs from previous Guild Exhibitions, as well as the ones which have been presented to the Guild by several members.

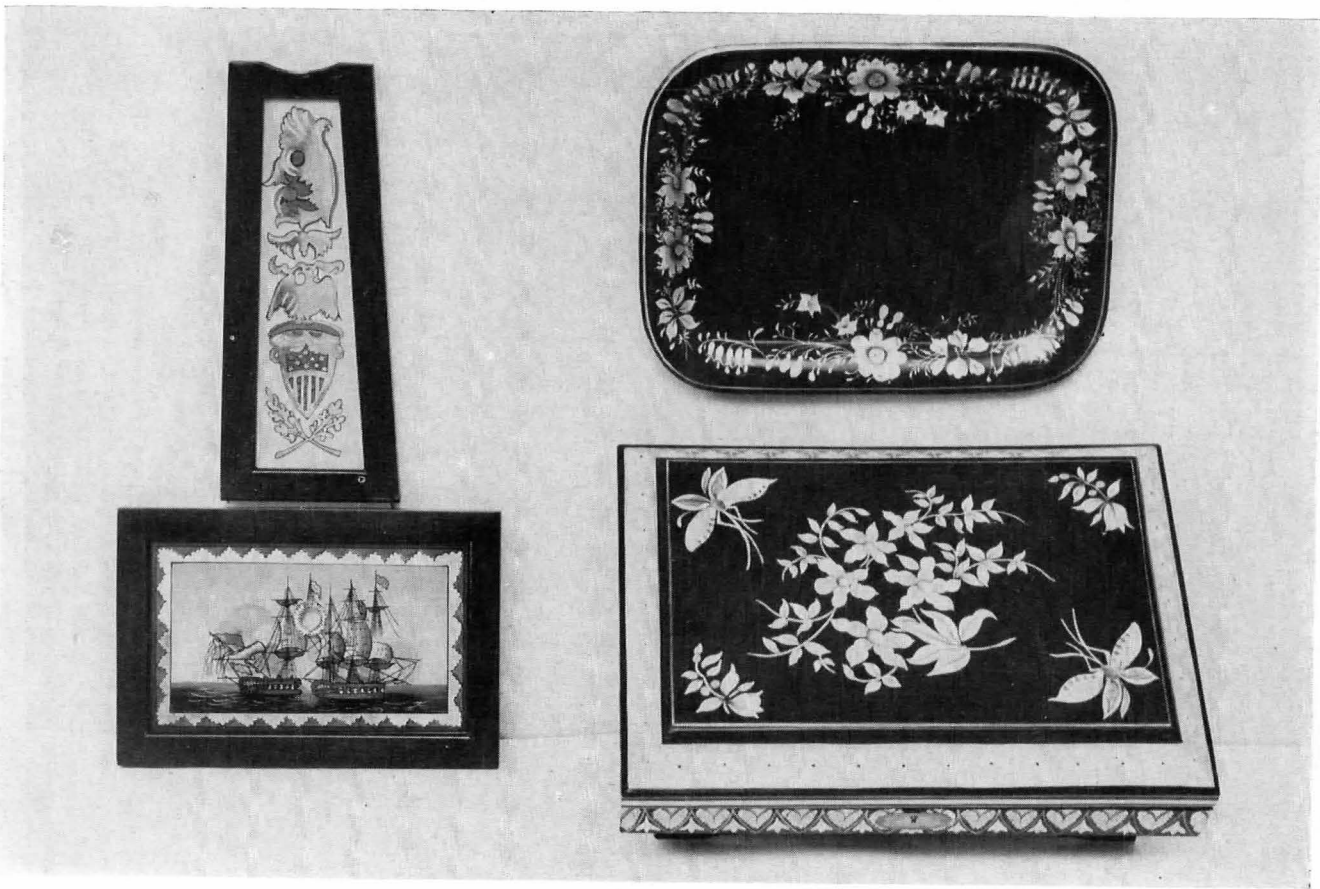
Members' work was shown by classes at the opposite end of the gallery from the originals. Perhaps for the first time, there was no great difference between the two when the doors were opened to the many guests and Museum visitors.

The truly fine articles submitted were a tribute to the hard work of the Standards and Judging Committee. Patiently judging trays, trunks, chairs and glass; showing only those pieces that have received an A or B award; insisting on authenticity of design and technique, they are building an exhibition of members' work worthy of the name of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild.

Permission may be granted by the Exhibition Committee to Guild Chapters to hold similar exhibitions when the same careful standards of craftsmanship are observed.

The Committee wishes to thank those members and friends who loaned originals and hopes that they will respond as generously in future Guild Exhibitions. Since our meetings are held in widely different localities, fine work (both originals and reproductions) may be shown many times to good purpose.

BERNICE DRURY
Chairman of Exhibitions



"A" AWARDS AT BURLINGTON, VERMONT:
Greta Kidner, Helen McCarthy, Laura Nichols

REPORT ON JUDGING AND STANDARDS

The Committee for Judging and Standards met at the Fleming Museum, Burlington, Vermont on October 10, 11, and 12, 1950.

The Guidance Sheets were read and it was recommended that several requirements in Free Hand Bronze be changed.

Teaching methods, teacher training, local exhibitions, craft centers and current publications were discussed. The use of black and white patterns for reproducing early decoration was considered and found to be a very poor method for painting or teaching the old methods. The Standards of the Guild were established to encourage Historical research and the authentic reproduction of colors and techniques as practiced by the craftsmen of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Individual sheets were made at the end of the period for recommendations on Standards. These sheets were compiled by Mrs. Martin and read at the Directors Meeting, October 12.

Forty-five pieces were judged for membership: five received an "A" rating in country Tin, two an "A" rating in Stencilling.

Members submitted twenty-four pieces to be judged for craftsman. Five "A" awards were given in stencilling, four in country tin, two in gold leaf and one glass panel.

These awards bring the total of "A" awards up to one hundred and eighty-seven which is a good record for five years. There are 223 members in the files of exhibitors. Twenty-five applicants have completed one half the requirements for membership and were asked to submit more work in the Spring.

JUDGES

Mrs. George Abbott	Vt.	Mrs. Stuart Brown	Mass.
Mrs. Carrol H. Drury	Vt.	Mrs. Vernon Hall	Mass.
Mrs. Robert Slater	Vt.	Mrs. George Elder	Conn.
Mrs. Alfred Ells	N. H.	Mrs. Carl Kidner	N. Y.
Miss Lucille Stuart	N. Y.		

RECORDERS

Mrs. John Clarke	Mass.	Mrs. Wayland Porter	N. H.
Mrs. Edith Hall	Vt.	Mrs. Dorothy Eckburg	N. H.
Mrs. Willis Howard	N. H.		

The name of Helen Elder, chairman of the finance committee, was omitted from the list of committee chairmen in our last issue. Her address is Mrs. George Elder, 810 Farmington Ave., West Hartford 7, Conn.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE:

1. Free Hand Bronze to be listed after Lace Edge Painting for Craftsman award to allow more time for research.
2. Ads in the Decorator to be screened—no publications advertised—unless they meet Guild Standards.
3. Sale of Decorator through members only.
4. Guild name to be used solely for official Guild business.
5. Dues raised and an initiation fee established to pay increased cost of publishing Decorator.
6. Publicity on Guild Standards thru longer exhibition periods and small local exhibitions.
7. Commercial exhibits to be held in a separate room.

VIOLET MILNES SCOTT, *Chairman*

"A" AWARD WINNERS AT STURBRIDGE, MASS., MAY, 1950

COUNTY TIN

Irene Slater, Royalton, Vt.; Evelyn Benson, Worcester, Mass.; Wanda Laskevich, Springfield, Vt.; Helen McCarthy, Bronxville, N. Y.; Alma Dibble, Bronxville, N. Y.; Ruth Carter, Wellesley Hills, Mass.; Mrs. Edwin Dimon, Southampton, N. Y.; Emily Heath, Darien, Conn.

STENCILLING ON TIN

Esther Hall, Wellesley Hills, Mass.; Louise Johnson, Springfield, Mass.; Mrs. Ernest Miller, Plantsville, Conn.; Eleanor Van Riper, Yarmouthport, Mass.; Hazel White, Patchogue, L. I.; Mrs. George Thomas, Beverly, Mass.; Evelyn Benson, Worcester, Mass.; Ellen Sabine, New York.

STENCILLING ON WOOD

Gladys Symington, Rockville, Conn.; Margaret Watts, Harrington Park, N. J.; Mrs. Lewis Gordon, East Williston, L. I.; Louise Johnson, Springfield, Mass.; Maxine Loveland, Wethersfield, Conn.; Dorothy Meehan, Harrington Park, N. J.; Mrs. Ernest Miller, Plantsville, Conn.; Laura Nichols, Uxbridge, Mass.

FREEHAND BRONZE

Martha Muller, Beechurst, L. I.

GLASS PANEL, STENCILLED BORDER

Helen Elder, West Hartford, Conn.; Irene Slater, Royalton, Vt.; Emilie Underhill, Bellport, L. I.

GLASS PANEL, GOLD LEAF BORDER

Emilie Underhill, Bellport, L. I.

"GOING, GOING, GONE"

RUTH COGGINS, *Chairman*

If you did not attend the *Tinware Auction*, held under the direction of the Museum Committee, at Burlington, you just don't know what you missed, both in fun and tinware.

At two P.M. in the Fleming Museum, the auctioneers sounded their tin horns (later sold) for attention, and the Auction was off, with surprises and bargains for all.

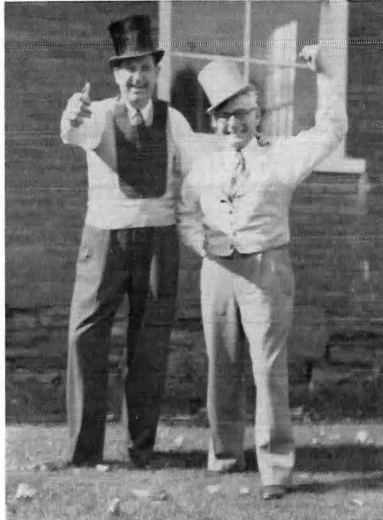
Carl Kidner and Herb Coggins wore high beaver hats and brocaded waistcoats (which were not sold) and kept up a steady chatter interspersed with humorous comments on the varied wares for sale. These wares ran the gamut of tinware, all the way from a fine chippendale tea caddy to "Grandma Perkins" milk pans.

I would like to say here a few words of thanks and praise for the whole hearted and generous manner in which many of the members contributed tinware and other articles that were auctioned off to the furtherance of the Museum Fund.

It is true that the auctioneers took a few liberties, innocently enough, to color the character of the items they sold, but all took it in good part, and entered into the spirit of the event. Some of the members bought back the articles they contributed at many times their worth. Others gave away to less successful bidders, some of the articles they bid in, and I do think this all reflected credit on our members.

The auction lasted two hours, and by the active bidding that continued up until the last time the gavel fell on the improvised auction block, the activity could have well lasted another hour, but the rules of the auditorium required that all vacate at 4 P.M.

Watch for the announcement of the next *Auction*, and don't miss it.



AUCTIONEERS, Herbert Coggins and Carl Kidner

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Museum Committee met at Burlington, Vermont on October 13th, with five members present, Mrs. Charles Auer, Mrs. Clyde Holmes, Mrs. Carl Kidner, and Mr. Walter Wright.

Plans were completed for the Auction which was to take place next day. Mrs. Auer and Mrs. Holmes were to keep the record of articles and make change, while Mrs. Kidner and Mrs. Coggins were to distribute the auctioned articles as they were sold.

The Committee wishes to thank all those who contributed to this successful Auction, and hopes that we can have another soon. In the two hours we were allotted for the Auction, we made the grand sum of \$243.10.

A personal contribution from Mrs. H. T. Gates, was added to the fund.

Respectfully submitted,

RUTH COGGINS
Chairman

Note: The following interesting account was inadvertently omitted from the last issue of the Decorator.

PINE TREE STATE CHAPTER EXHIBITION

A visit last August with one of our Guild members, Miss Alice Blouin, coincided with an exhibition of Early American Decoration sponsored by the Pine Tree State Chapter of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, at the Massachusetts House Workshop in Lincolnville, Maine.

The exhibition was organized by Mrs. Clyde Holmes of Belfast, Maine, in cooperation with Miss Obershaw and Miss Hester Hoffman of the Massachusetts House Workshop. It was so arranged to show the old and the new closely together, in order to demonstrate why we are decorating in the Early American manner. This Chapter has only nine members, but they are working to interest the public in higher standards of workmanship, authentic designs and to bring into the Guild more Maine members.

Visitors came from all of the New England states, New York and south, even from Texas, many of them having studied with pupils of Esther Brazer. I feel sure such exhibitions will be very helpful to the public, and reach further than Maine in raising the standard of this type of decoration.

MARIAN WEISS (New Jersey)

If the person who wrote us from Exeter, N. H., but neglected to sign his name, will contact us again we will be happy to acknowledge his communication directly.

It has been brought to our attention that a more accurate name for the "fans" illustrated on page 6 of the December Decorator would be "hand fire-screens." Their function, of course, was to keep the heat of the fireplace away from the face.

REPORT ON CHAPTERS

The *Charter Oak Chapter* has held two meetings at the Y.W.C.A. in Hartford, Conn. At the November, 1950 meeting, Mrs. Sherwood Martin and Mrs. George Elder reported on the Guild Meeting in Burlington, Vermont. It was voted to have monthly meetings, part of them work meetings, and to ask Guild members living in Springfield, Mass. and vicinity to join their Chapter. At the January, 1951 meeting, Mrs. Sherwood Martin reported on the recent National Directors meeting. Mrs. Martin was appointed Program Chairman and Mrs. MacArthur, Publicity Chairman. After the business meeting, Mr. Walter Wright gave a demonstration of his technique in painting roses and very graciously answered many questions.

On October 21, 1950, the *Fairchester Chapter* met at the studio of Mrs. Ziegler. The question of contacting new Chapter members was discussed and Mrs. Heath suggested that a notice appear in the *Decorator* instructing new members in the Guild to apply to their local Chapters for membership. Mrs. Ziegler proposed that a scrapbook, containing items of interest to decorators, be started. Mrs. Ziegler and Mrs. Heath urged that all decorators put more stress on research into the history of the patterns they obtain. In this connection, the sale of black and white patterns by commercial houses was discussed and agreed to be undesirable. A report on the auction and brief resumes of the talks by Mr. Galligan and Mr. Graeme, given at the Burlington meeting, were given by Mrs. Heath and Mrs. Ziegler.

The January 20 meeting was held at the studio of Mrs. Walter Burrows. Mrs. Coggins gave an account of the successful auction held at the Burlington meeting, for the purpose of raising money for the Museum Fund. An announcement of Mr. Walter Wright's two-week class, to be held in May at Lenox, Mass. was made by Mrs. Ziegler. Those interested are to contact Mrs. Kenneth Sheldon at Hawthorne Hill in Lenox. Mrs. Heath suggested that any bibliography and pertinent information be reported to the *Decorator*. The following books were brought to the meeting: "Handbook of Early American Decoration" by Edith Cramer, "Book of American Clocks" by Brooks Palmer, and three volumes of the magazine, "Old Furniture—Magazine of Domestic Ornament." Mrs. Charles Safford, a guest from the *Pioneer Chapter*, was asked to describe the functioning of her Chapter. A meeting was planned at Mrs. Burrows studio, for the purpose of working on patterns, to be added to the portfolio.

The *Long Island Chapter* is planning its next meeting for the end of May or early June. There will probably be a luncheon, an exhibit and business meeting. Plans are also under way to raise something for the Museum Fund.

The *Pine Tree State Chapter* held its fall meeting in the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland. A few guests were present who were interested in becoming Guild members. The Burlington meeting was reported on by those attending. Plans for the Spring meeting to follow the Guild meeting were made.

The *Pioneer* and *Lexington Chapters* have not reported.

Respectfully submitted,

THELMA C. RIGA
Chairman of Chapters

SCHEDULE FOR INNERWICK CLASSES

Mrs. Max Muller, curator of the Esther Stevens Brazer Collection of Early American Decoration, announces that classes will be open to Guild members on the following dates:

September 25-26-27
October 30-31, Nov. 1
November 27-28-29

If groups of more than three wish to make reservations during July and August, dates will be arranged. The charge is seven dollars per day, including instruction. Reservations should be made through Jean Wylie, Business Manager, 40 Fitch Avenue, Noroton Heights, Conn.

Persons desiring overnight accommodations should write directly to Mrs. Clarence W. Brazer, 31-07 Union Street, Flushing, N. Y.

SEMINARS ON AMERICAN CULTURE

The fourth annual Seminars on American Culture will be offered by the New York State Historical Association at Cooperstown, New York, from July 5-12.

History of American Folk Decoration, with Jean Lipman as chairman, assisted by Nina Fletcher Little, Emily J. Heath and Eve H. Meulendyke, a series of illustrated lectures and discussions on American decoration before 1850, will be held mornings. In the afternoon there will be a correlated course, Early American Decoration, Technique Demonstrations, the chairman of which will be Emily J. Heath.

The cost of the Seminars to non-members of the Association is \$25.00, including luncheon each day at The Farmers' Museum. A full statement of the program may be obtained by writing either to Louis C. Jones, Director of the New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York or to Mrs. Emily J. Heath, Noroton, Conn.

SOCIETY OF VERMONT CRAFTSMEN

The Society of Vermont Craftsmen announces summer courses in Arts and Crafts, to be given at Fletcher Farm Craft School from July 9 to August 31. The courses include Early American Decoration with Walter Wright; Country Tin with Bernice Drury. The last two weeks (August 20-31) will be devoted to classes in teacher training and advanced crafts. Virginia Martin will instruct in Early American Decoration during this period, and Neil Perkins, Teacher Trainer of the Vermont State Department of Education, will conduct the classes in methods of teaching and planning course outlines. Further information may be had from Miss Anna Meyer, Brandon, Vermont.

UNUSUAL ORIGINALS

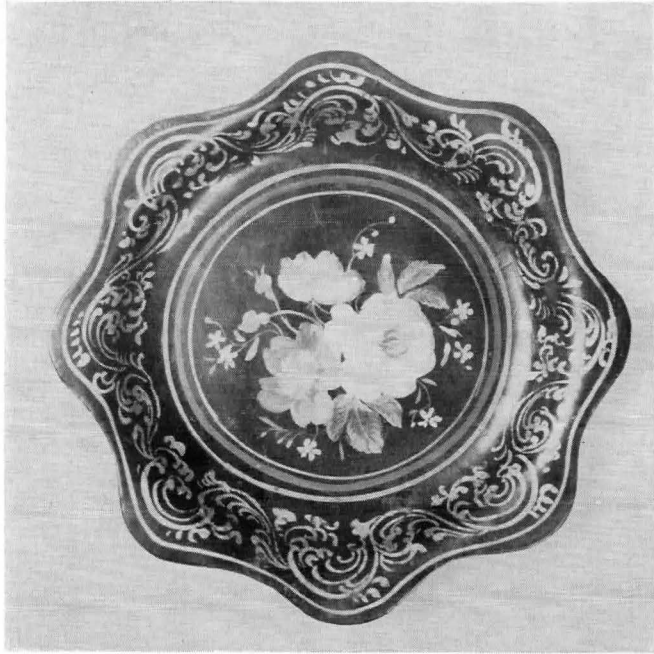
VIRGINIA MILNE WHEELOCK

7" Victorian tray,
owned by Miss Avis
Morison, Spring-
field, Mass.

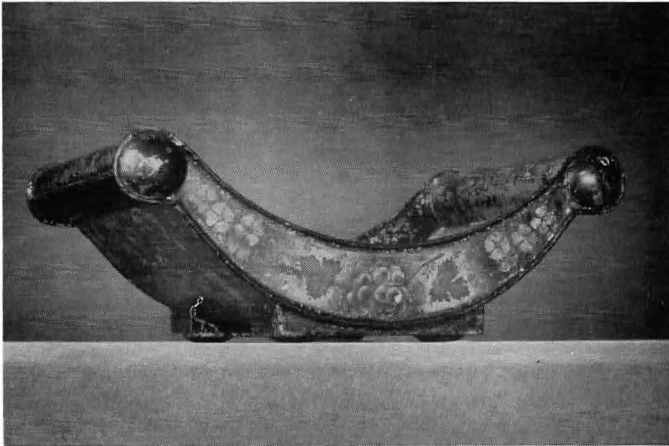
Large pink rose.
Open flower is ver-
million, smaller
flowers white.

Center bouquet sur-
rounded by two
bands of gold leaf,
with a Prussian blue
and umber band be-
tween them.

Center border gold
leaf.



This one measures 15" x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", and stands 5" high. Sides decorated with very fine powders and stencils. Grapes stencilled in Patent Amaranth (grape color) and highlighted with silver. Silver dusted on grape leaf silhouettes with bright transparent green wash and veins in free-hand gold bronze. Fine black stems, leaves and tendrils painted on dusted background. Pale yellow gold dusted around grape leaves, shading to Roman gold then copper.



Cheese boat, owned
by Mrs. Charles
Szilkas, Wellesley,
Mass.; sometimes
called *cheese cradle*.

Flowers at ends
dusted in pale gold
with copper flow-
ers in back. Rounds
on rolled ends
shaded gold, Roman
gold and copper.



THE BOOK SHELF

JESSICA BOND

EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, by *Esther Stevens Brazer*. This is (and probably always will be) the most important book of its kind on our book shelf. It is the work of a pioneer in the almost silent field of decorating. We all know decorating was done in the early days on walls, floors, furniture, clocks, tin, etc., but how it was done, when it was done, and by whom has been brought to light by Mrs. Brazer. By constant study and research, she learned to tell whether a decorated piece were painted or stencilled, the section of the country it originally came from, and the approximate date it was decorated. Not only could she copy any decorated piece, but in this book she clearly tells others how to do it. Here is a vast amount of material for the student of decoration; how to recognize old designs, how to copy them in the manner of the old time decorators, and how to restore damaged pieces without disturbing the original. All the phases of technique practiced by old artisans have been included. On the title page is an apt description which says this is "an invaluable reference book and a complete course of instruction for the student of early design and restoration." Pond-Ekberg Company, Pub. Can be ordered from Dr. Clarence W. Brazer, 31-07 Union Street, Flushing, N. Y. \$16.50.

EARLY AMERICAN STENCIL DECORATION, by *Janet Waring*. It is always particularly satisfying to find a "Specialist" in the decorating field. Janet Waring has written a detailed history on stencilling. The first part of the book is on stencilled walls and floors, with actual photographs of old rooms showing clearly the original stencils. Miss Waring's study of walls began as a casual interest, but encouragement from others lead her to continue her research until it became quite a thrilling adventure. She takes us throughout New England's quite villages showing us the houses where itinerant painters had stopped and stencilled the walls or floors. His outfit in those early days was modest, consisting of some dry colors, brushes, a supply of stencils, a piece of cord and some chalk. The family probably made their choice of background colors and whether the walls should have an all-over pattern or just borders. Borders outlined the windows and other architectural features of the room, while friezes edged the ceilings. Sometimes the whole space over the mantel was treated importantly with birds, weeping willows and urns filled with flowers. Quarter fans filled the corners of plain walls, framed by graceful vines and flowers. The colors used were ochre, dull red and green, pale blue, gray, and black for accent. The paint was probably mixed with skim milk, a popular medium in those days, and the

effect was soft and pleasing. Even today some of these old walls, mellowed with time, are clear in their color.

The second half of the book is devoted chiefly to furniture, starting with the finest type of stencilling on Empire pianos, tables, secretaries, chairs and important smaller pieces. Rosewood and mahogany furniture were stencilled right on the beautiful graining of the natural wood, and the stencilling itself was elaborate and so exquisitely modelled that it remains unrivalled. The cutting of these early stencils was not as difficult as the later ones because the detail work was done by hand. Small shadings of flowers and fruit were done with tiny velvet pads called "pounces" and pieces of leather drawn thru the hollow of a quill were also used for small detail. Gold leaf was used too, either as an urn to hold the stencilled fruit, or as a separate design on drawer fronts or molding. Some early Hitchcock chairs boasted of this fine stencilling also, but as factory production cried for speed, much of the hand detail was omitted, and we find the gold leaf trimmings being replaced by bronze powder. As years went on, the stencils were cut all in one piece, little or no shading was done at all, and our well known Hitchcock chair went into a decline.

This book was published first in 1937 by William R. Scott under the title "Early American Stencils on Walls and Furniture," and sold for \$15. Later, an edition on just the walls and floors was printed. Now the first edition (with some slight changes) has been reissued. Century House \$10.

PROGRAM FOR 1951

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND JUDGING

1. To present the members with information helpful in research on techniques of Early American Decoration.
2. To create an interest in history and background of decoration.
3. To study originals and present any new theories or techniques.
4. To report in *The Decorator*, literature pertaining to Early American Decoration and review current publications.
5. To visit local exhibitions, Arts and Crafts Groups and report on trends of decoration and teaching methods.
6. To assist in the program for teacher training in every possible way.
7. To contact applicants and help them understand the aims, standards, obligations, and privileges of the Guild.
8. To continue to acquaint the public with authentic techniques and designs through our Exhibitions.

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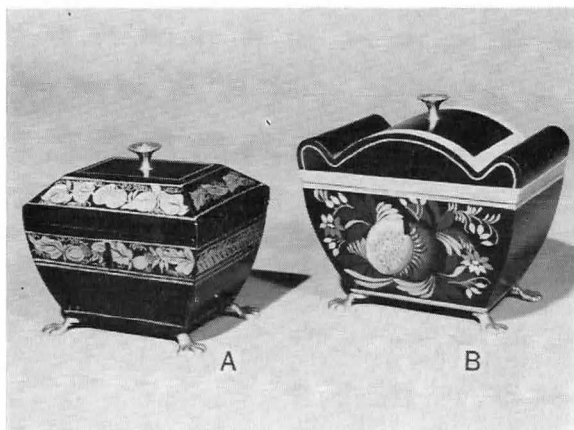
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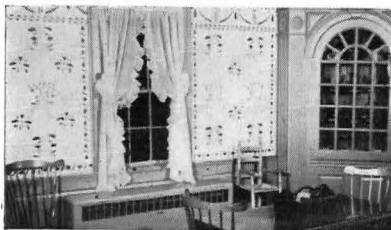
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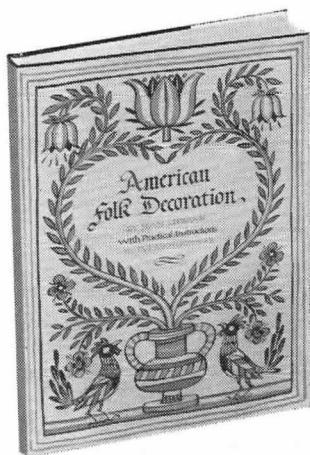
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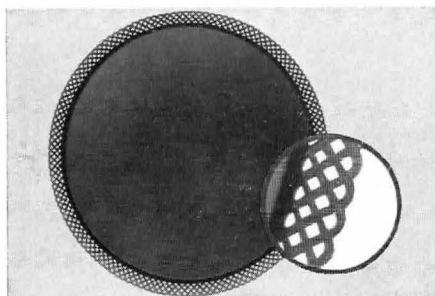
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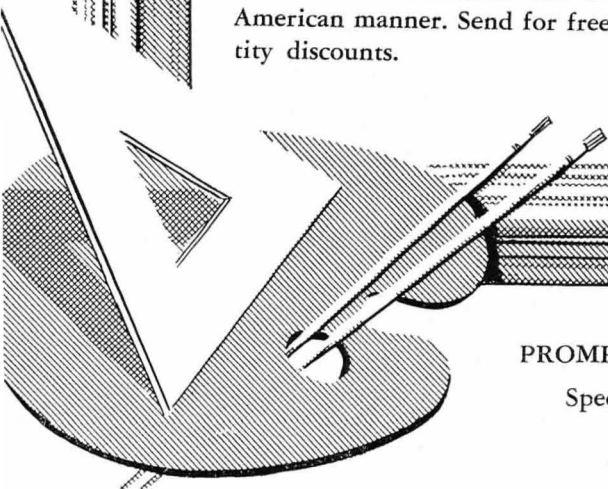
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